

**OPENING STATEMENT OF
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RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH AND SCIENCE EDUCATION
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

H.R. 2436, Nanotechnology Education

September 25, 2007

10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Today's hearing will examine a bill to prepare students for careers in nanotechnology, and look at the current state of nanotechnology education at the high school and undergraduate level. The Science and Technology Committee has supported a number of nanotechnology and education activities through the National Nanotechnology Initiative, and remains interested in ways that we can improve these programs. I am glad that we will hear today from a variety of individuals who all agree that nanotechnology is an important part of our future science and technology workforce.

It would be wonderful if every high school and college student had the opportunity to use nanotechnology equipment and become exposed to the cutting edge of this innovative field at an early age. The intent of the bill – to grow the nanotechnology workforce by capturing student interest early – is clearly commendable. With that said, though, I have some reservations as to the way that this bill attempts to achieve its goals.

Earlier this year, the Research and Science Education Subcommittee examined another bill which authorized a pilot grant program at the National Science Foundation for high school laboratory equipment. The Partnership for Access to Laboratory Science (PALS) bill became a part of the America COMPETES Act, signed into law in August. The schools eligible for the PALS grants have to be high-need schools, and I believe this is appropriate. When we were evaluating the PALS bill, this Subcommittee learned from another panel of witnesses that at many schools, the need for even the most rudimentary laboratory materials was indeed high. We also learned from witnesses that at times, federal science education programs do not adequately align with state science and math standards, making it difficult for well-intentioned materials to be utilized by a typical classroom schoolteacher.

That leads to my concerns about H.R. 2436, because it provides equipment for low-need schools. Perhaps a better route to achieve the bill's goals would be to encourage companies to donate equipment and employee time to exceptional high schools and undergraduate programs. This Committee's bipartisan goal has always been to ensure that all of our nation's students receive an excellent education in science, and we will not waver from that goal. I hope that our witnesses today can help us determine how H.R. 2436 would help us achieve that goal, so that all students benefit, not just those with exceptional teachers and students.